

CHAPTER VI

THE RISE OF THE MIXED-BLOOD

EARLY in the colonial period race mixture resulted in an intermediate population group in more favorable position for social advancement. Mulatto slaves, because they were ordinarily chosen by their masters and mistresses for the more delicate and exacting household tasks, to be *mucamas* (maids), *amas de criar* ("mammies"), and other *peçoal de casa* (house servants), early developed into a distinct group apart from the field hands.¹ They were baptized, received the master's name, and often were married in accordance with the prescribed legal and religious practices, thus establishing legitimate families and adding to the social security of their offspring by building up a family tradition.

Many *mulatinhos*, illegitimate children of the *senhor*, learned to read and to write even more quickly than white, legitimate children, outstripping them in preparatory and even advanced studies. The Reconcavo of Bahia yields a number of such cases.² Particularly fortunate, we are told, were the children of priests. Their fathers, being ordinarily from upper-class families and possessing money and prestige, transmitted to their offspring, colored as well as white, ad-

¹ F. J. Oliveira Vianna, *Evolução do povo brasileiro* (2d ed.; São Paulo, 1933), p. 157; Jean Baptiste de Lacerda, "The *Métis*, or Half-breeds of Brazil," in *Papers on Inter-racial Problems*, ed. G. Spiller (London, 1911), p. 379.

² Gilberto Freyre, *Casa grande e senzala* (2d ed.; Rio, 1936), pp. 324-25. The author throughout this chapter is greatly indebted to Freyre's *Sobrados e mucumbos* (São Paulo, 1936), esp. chap. vii.

175
563*
567
357
554

175
56
848
[145] •
[793]